Sessions Two, Three, and Four: Emphasizing Personal Strengths

Approximately: 1.5–2 hours

Sessions Two, Three, and Four Activities:

A. Solicit client issues and questions from the initial session.
B. Continue identifying personal strengths, abilities, and skills.
C. Encourage linkage to medical care.
D. Identify and address personal needs and barriers to linkage.
E. Summarize the session, the client’s strengths, and agreed-upon next steps.
F. Plan for the next session(s), with the medical care provider and/or you.

Sessions Two, Three, and Four Guide Agenda

2A. Review of Session One

2B. Client Assessment

2C. Linkage to Medical Care

2D. Review and Summarize the Session

2E. Schedule Medical Appointment and/or Next Session

Forms and Documents Needed for Sessions Two, Three, and Four:

- *ARTAS Session Plan*
- *Strengths Assessment Form*
- *Resource directory*
- *Appointment cards*
- *Incentive, if provided*
- *Session Notes*
- *Session Notes Summary Sheet*
- *Case Review Form*
- *Life Domains List*

Remember: The sessions are client-driven. As such, **the agenda, time, content, and forms must be adjusted to the client’s needs.**

2A: Review of Session One (and Two and Three, if appropriate)

Purpose: To clarify and address any questions or areas of confusion the client has from the initial contact or previous session.

Forms and Documents: *ARTAS Session Plan*

Advanced Preparation:

- Review the client's ARTAS Session Plan, if one was developed in the previous session.

Key Considerations:

Remember that the client:

- Needs support and resources to effectively link to medical care. Be sure to review the client's needs and refer them to needed services to assist in accessing medical care.
- Often needs assistance to identify personal strengths and abilities to facilitate their linkage to medical care.
- May need to reflect on their HIV status and barriers encountered in disclosing their status to others and in accessing social services.

Procedure:

For all clients:

1. Welcome the client back for Session Two (or Three or Four) and congratulate them on following up successfully with today's session. Recognize the many demands the client has and state how much you appreciate their taking time to meet with you.

2. Ask the client what questions, concerns, or new insights they have as a result of the previous session. You may also want to ask about their thoughts about linking to medical care since your last session and any reactions they have to the focus on strengths, which will help you to assess whether they are starting to adopt the approach.

3. Summarize any additional points made during the discussion.

For clients who have not decided to link to medical care:

4. Next step, continue to 2B: Client Assessment.

For clients who have decided to link to medical care but have not yet attended their appointment:

5. Review the outcomes of all activities listed on the ARTAS Session Plan for both you and the client. If necessary, revise the plan.

6. Ask the client about any new barriers and/or strengths discovered as a result of completing the ARTAS Session Plan activities. If necessary, revise the plan.

7. Next step, skip to section 2D: Review and Summarize the Session.

2B: Client Assessment

Purpose: Assess readiness to link to medical care and to help the client self-identify personal strengths, abilities, and skills.

Forms and Documents: *Resource directory*
Strengths Assessment Form

Advanced Preparation:

- Review the state/local legal requirements regarding HIV disclosure.
- Review the client's strengths assessment, if one was started in the previous session.

Key Considerations:
You should:

- Use effective communication skills.
- Know the state/local legal requirements regarding disclosing one's HIV status.
- Have natural conversations with the client to identify additional strengths.
- Ask open-ended questions that encourage the client to provide more substantive information to build on the list of strengths developed in Session One.
- Show the client genuine respect and concern, as this is the starting point of a helping relationship.

Procedure:
For clients who have not yet decided to link to medical care:

1. Remind the client about the benefits of linkage, early HIV treatment, and medication adherence.

2. Identify and explore reasons why the client may be hesitant to link to medical care. Provide information that may help alleviate client concerns and/or address any misinformation.

3. Remind the client how identifying strengths, abilities, and skills relates to their ability to stay healthy and link to medical care. For example:
   "Oftentimes, when you see ways that you've been successful in the past, it helps you to be successful again. Knowing how you've been successful helps you plan how to deal with barriers or problems you may have getting the medical care you need or achieving other goals."

4. Remind the client of examples of their strengths and abilities that have already become apparent in the previous session. This will help the client think about

personal strengths, resources, and skills. Some common examples include:

- The courage to get tested for HIV
- The wisdom to come to ARTAS
- The ability or desire to live independently
- Being punctual, if they arrived on time

5. **This is a new activity started in Session Two.** Conduct the strengths assessment by following the instructions and introduction script starting on **page 106** of the Session Forms section.

6. Next step, continue to 2C: Linkage to Medical Care.

2C: Linkage to Medical Care

Purpose: Encourage the client to seek medical care and, if the client is interested, assist them in the process to make that linkage.

Forms and Documents: *ARTAS Session Plan*
Resource directory
Session Notes
Session Notes Summary Sheet
Case Review Form

Advanced Preparation:

- Review any specific requirements, characteristics/traits, agency policies, and required paperwork of the healthcare providers.
- Review any local, state, or federal policies such as eligibility requirements for services, Medicaid, ADAP, Ryan White services, waitlists, mandatory disclosure laws.
- Review the client's ARTAS Session Plan, if one was developed in the previous session.

Key Considerations:

Inform the client about the following:

- Care and treatment services provided by your agency and/or your community partners.
- Specific requirements, such as timeliness, rescheduling policies, or paperwork required for healthcare providers in the area.
- Characteristics or traits of a particular clinic(s) or community partner(s) that match the client's needs. For example, a clinic with bilingual staff or interpreters for a non-English-speaking / limited-English-proficient client.
- Relevant policies (at the agency, local, state, and/or federal levels), issues, or potential barriers, such as eligibility requirements for services, Medicaid, ADAP, Ryan White services, waitlists, mandatory disclosure laws. Focus on policies with the most immediate effect on the client.

Procedure:

For clients who have not decided to link to medical care:

1. Ask the client about their expectations and concerns about seeking medical care and treatment for HIV. Be sensitive to the client's stated and unstated reasons for not wanting to seek medical treatment. Begin the discussion with these questions:
   - *"What are your thoughts about linking to medical care?"*
   - *"What barriers or problems might get in the way of your going to a doctor or medical clinic?"*
2. Assess the client's tangible and perceived barriers. The client may have a multitude of personal barriers that impede their ability to seek services. Check in with the client about the following:
   - What is their housing situation? Will homelessness or insecure housing pose a barrier to linking to care?
   - How will they get to their medical appointment? Do they anticipate any transportation issues?
   - What financial considerations may pose a barrier to linkage to care?
   - Will active drug or alcohol addiction pose a barrier to linkage to care (if applicable)?

Some of the perceived barriers could be fears about family, friends, and community members discovering their HIV status or healthcare needs.

3. Engage the client in a discussion about medical options, provide information, and help them clarify concerns, issues, and barriers. **Remember, it is not your role to make the decision to link to medical care for the client.**

4. Demonstrate your thorough knowledge of the medical care environment and requirements and provide information based on available resources. This includes:
   - Providers and their specialties and personalities
   - How to navigate the system to apply for and access Ryan White, Medicaid, or other services
   - In other words, all the background research you did in the pre-implementation section to become familiar with community partners

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At this point, one of four things is likely to happen. Based on where the client is in their decision, follow these instructions:

If the client decides to link to medical care at this point, continue to the Close-Out Session.

If the client is not ready to make this decision, skip to 2D: Review and Summarize the Session.

If the client (a) wants to drop out of ARTAS or (b) does not want to link to medical care, skip to step 8.

For clients who wish to link to medical care at this point:

5. Introduce the ARTAS Session Plan:

   "Our goal is to help you get connected to a doctor. As you may recall, we will have up to five sessions in 90 days to help you achieve this and other objectives by identifying your strengths and overcoming barriers."

   "The ARTAS Session Plan is one of the activities that can guide us to accomplish your goal(s). This plan will help us organize our work together and make sure that we identify everything we need to work on. We'll write down the goals to remind us of what we're doing, and you will always have a copy of your most recent ARTAS Session Plan, if you want it."

6. Follow the **ARTAS Session Plan** instructions on **page 112** of the Session Forms section. The ARTAS Session Plan helps the client identify objectives and possible barriers, activities to accomplish the objective(s), the person responsible, target dates to complete each activity, and related strength(s). It is recommended to commit to the plan in writing, allowing you and the client to easily track progress and pinpoint activities that may need to be adjusted over time.

7. Next step, continue to 2D: Review and Summarize the Session.

For clients who want to drop out of ARTAS or do not want to link to medical care now or in the near future:

8. Keep the conversation positive! Cover the following topics:
   a. Engage the client in a discussion about: (1) their reasons for attending the second (third or fourth) ARTAS session and (2) their reasons for deciding not to continue with ARTAS / seek medical care.
   b. Let the client know that reluctancy to link to medical care is normal.
   c. Review the client's strengths discussed during the session.
   d. Discuss their accomplishments made during the session and ask how, if at all, the session has been helpful.
   e. Keep the door open. Remind the client that your sessions together can continue as long as they think it can help clarify and remove barriers to seeking treatment before the end of the 90 days.
   f. Offer the client your business card and end the session.

(Note: If at any point the client decides to link to medical care and/or not drop out of ARTAS, continue to 2E: Review and Summarize the Session.)

9. **Next step, end the session and complete paperwork:**
    - Depending on your agency's procedures and/or schedule for the day, you may want to take a few minutes to complete all the required paperwork before moving on to the next client and/or task. Recommended paperwork to complete includes:
        - Session Notes
        - Session Notes Summary Sheet (if the client dropped out)
        - Case Review Form

2D: Review and Summarize the Session

Purpose: To review what was discussed with the client during the session and summarize the agreed-upon next steps.

Forms and Documents: *ARTAS Session Plan*

Advanced Preparation: *None.*

Key Considerations:
You should:

- Review the ARTAS Session Plan activities and discuss/revise anything that was documented incorrectly, if a plan was developed.

Procedure:
For clients who wish to link to medical care at this point or clients who are not ready to make this decision:

1. Provide a summary of the session or ask the client to summarize the session and the client's strengths. During the session, the client may be very emotional and upset, particularly if they have been recently diagnosed. Therefore, summarizing the session and the client's strengths is extremely important to help the client remember the key points.

2. Review the ARTAS Session Plan activities, person responsible, and target date to complete the items with the client, if a plan was developed. Remember, some of these are activities you are committing to complete prior to the session.

3. Next step, continue to 2E: Schedule Medical Appointment and/or Next Session.

2E: Schedule Medical Appointment and/or Next Session

Purpose: To schedule appointments with you, medical providers, and support services as needed.

Forms and Documents: *ARTAS Session Plan*
Resource directory
Appointment cards
Incentive, if provided
Session Notes
Session Notes Summary Sheet
Case Review Form

Advanced Preparation:

- Review your availability for the next session and/or medical appointment.
- Review the resource directory for medical providers, clinics, and other services as needed.
- Bring the transportation vouchers/tokens/schedules.

Key Considerations:
You should:

- Refer the client to services as needed. The client may present with other needs that are related to their recent diagnosis or existing HIV status.
- If the client wishes to schedule a medical appointment, then provide them with detailed information about the clinic hours and services they provide.
- Make sure all paperwork is completed and discuss how client information will be used. Stress privacy and confidentiality.
- Arrange and confirm all appointments with or for the client, including medical as well as other services as needed.
- Offer to take the client or provide transportation to all scheduled appointments.
- Work on all identified barriers to following through with scheduled appointments.

Procedure:
For clients who wish to link to medical care at this point:

1. Clarify whether the client would like you to accompany them to the medical appointment.

2. Discuss the best time and date to schedule the appointment.
   - If the ARTAS Session Plan has activities that must be completed before the medical appointment that may take some time, schedule the appointment further out or wait until the next session to schedule the medical appointment. Examples of activities that might take more time to complete are arranging for transportation and processing Medicaid enrollment forms.

3. Call the clinic or community partner (or have the client call) to schedule an appointment.
   - **If the next time you see the client will be at the medical visit:**

- Give them information about the staff and doctor and any required documents.
- Discuss in detail what the client should expect at each stage of the appointment.
- Help the client write down questions they would like to ask the health care provider and/or other clinic staff. Depending on the client, practice asking and answering questions with them so they feel comfortable with the list of prepared questions.
- Ask the client if they would like for you to call them before the medical appointment, as a reminder.

For all clients:

4. Schedule and/or make arrangements for the client to access needed social services, such as temporary housing and food banks.

5. Schedule a day, time, and meeting location for the next ARTAS session. Make sure accommodations are compatible with agency safety guidelines.
   - If the next session is **before the medical appointment or the client is not linking to medical care at this point**, offer to write down these details and to call the client before your next session as a reminder. The topics covered will follow the format for Session Three.
   - If the next session is scheduled for **after the medical appointment**, the next session will be the Close-Out Session (completing the work with the client).

6. Offer the client an **appointment card** (see samples on page 118 of the Session Forms section) to document the time, location, and agency name.

7. Give the client transportation tokens or vouchers to get home and/or to the next session or appointment. Offer to pick the client up, if that is an allowable activity at your agency.

8. Gather any contact and/or locator information from the client before they leave. Locator information will allow you to locate the client through family, friends, or other individuals who know how to reach them if the client's address changes, phone is disconnected, or the client is not reachable through the means provided in the initial intake (conducted within the agreed-upon rules for communicating with the client). Remind the client that you will attempt to contact them through these means only after a missed appointment.

   - To gather this information, discuss how the locator information will be used and be sure to inform the client that none of their personal information will be shared with the contacts provided. Information collected from the contact persons includes the following: usual place of residence, telephone number or address of someone who usually knows where the client can be found, places where they pick up mail or messages.

- Ask the client if the contacts are aware of their HIV status and assure the client that their contacts will not be told the reason for the call. You can say you are a friend trying to reach the client.

9. End the session by thanking the client for coming and congratulate them for a productive session. Remind the client that linking to medical care is important to their overall health and that you are there to help them attain services needed so that they are ready to access medical care and treatment.

10. Next step, complete paperwork:
    - Depending on your agency's procedures and/or schedule for the day, you may want to take a few minutes to complete all the required paperwork before moving on to the next client and/or task. Recommended paperwork to complete includes:
        - Session Notes
        - Session Notes Summary Sheet (if the client dropped out)
        - Case Review Form